



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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**Public Listening Sessions – Fall 2021
Ad Hoc Committee on Redistricting**

The City Council charged the Ad Hoc Committee to gather community input to the current redistricting plan; review the past plan (pre-2014); hear opinions about the number of councilors per ward/district; and consider the current ward/district configuration.

**LISTENING SESSION (Identical Meetings)
November 1, 2021 – 6pm-8pm – Contois Auditorium, City Hall**

Attendance

In-Person:

Anne Breña	Phet Keomanyvanh, CEDO	Jeff Comstock
George Love	Ethan Fellows, CEDO	Jim Holway
Richard Hilliard	Dan Richardson	Ken Sicard
Meagan Tuttle	Diane Meyerhoff	

Zoom:

Rama Kocherlakota	Barbara Headrick	Carol Livingston
Joan Shannon	Lea Terhune	Robert Bristow-Johnson
Sandy Wynne	Tiff Bluemle	Keith Pillsbury
Tim Ashe	Bill Keogh	Amanda Skehan
Meg Dyl.		

Draft Notes

6:07 PM: Diane Meyerhoff led off the meeting as the facilitator.

6:00-6:15 PM (15 mins) Public Forum: 2-minute limit per speaker

- No Speakers

6:15-6:30 PM (15 mins) Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Purpose
Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee Members &
Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates

- Purpose of these meetings is to gather public opinions and input.
- The council hopes to get general perspective on number of councilors and wards/districts as well as opinions about Ward plans.

6:30-6:45 PM (15 mins) Overview of Redistricting: Dan Richardson, City Attorney
& Meagan Tuttle, Principal Planner

Dan Richardson:

- Introduced and provided an overview on what redistricting is, a legal obligation by the city determined by a census every 10 years.
- The driving factor for redistricting is changes in population.
- The big change on the table: the redistricting committee has recommended this year, for the first time, single member districts (typically it has been 2 members per district).
- Big part of this current process is to find out public opinions and preferences for the upcoming redistricting.
- Traditional Redistricting Factors

Must Haves

- One person/one vote as required by 14th Amendment
 - Population of each district as nearly equal to every other district as practicable with deviations of <10%
- Contiguity of territory – one part of a district cannot be physically separate or detached from the other parts.
- Cannot separate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion

Should Haves

- Maintaining existing political subdivision lines or
- Honoring natural historical boundary lines
- Compactness
- Respect for communities of interest
- Providing small districts meaningful representation
- Use of census blocks- groupings of houses and apt buildings that are the smallest unit the census uses

- Previous redistricting evaluations had numerous criteria which were examined, 2021 brings its own additional potential considerations such as:
 - Preserve Incumbency?
 - Keep current number of wards?
 - Keep Districts?
 - Should areas of large student population be kept together or broken up into multiple wards?
 - Keep neighborhoods intact?
 - At large City Councilors?
 - Even v. Odd number of City Councilors?
 - Multiple representatives per ward?

Question: Please run through the pros and cons of some of these considerations

 - Student populations is not necessarily homogenous
- Results of previous decades' census' and their impacts on redistricting (Maps on presentation slides)
- Quick overview on the redistricting process, the current step is to receive public feedback and reports in order for City Council to develop and approve of a redistricting plan. This is then followed by public hearings and warnings and eventually followed by voter approval, legislative action, and governor approval respectively.
- Slides can be found online on the Redistricting Website

Conclusions from Q&A with the Audience

- Legislators determine important issues to be addressed
- Unknown how voting by mail will affect in-person polling

Meagan Tuttle: Presentation on Population changes

- Steadily rising population, ideal size of a ward in 2020 is 5,593
- Biggest difference in population are illustrated in Wards 1&7 (Seen in graphs on slides)
- The analysis of ward by ward populations helps determine needs for redistricting

6:45-7:50PM (65 mins) Facilitated Discussion of Redistricting Criteria and Community Priorities, Diane Meyerhoff

Diane Meyerhoff: Opened up questions to Zoom

- Sandy Wynne: Suspects that Ward 8 is larger than estimated due to the absence of student population during census, not interested in the student population staying together
 - Meagan: Regarding the student population during census- Census contacted local departments such as CEDO to make sure students reported as if they were answering the census from campus, in addition,

the schools were asked to report the students bed numbers. In conclusion, census reporting should be fairly accurate.

- Robert Bristow-Johnson: Regarding the drawing of the Ward 8 district, was drawn by Robert himself, the reason why ward 8 was drawn this way was not specifically in account of the student population, the real reason was that no other wards wanted their wards to get mangled. There were various issues, but due to their small nature, the only way to keep Wards 4&7 intact was to make the other wards smaller and made the sections that spilled out into the new Ward 8, which incidentally led for it to be a student dominated ward.
 - (Comment from Jim Holway) In addition, it was an attempt for more youth engagement
 - Lea Terhune: The goal of the wards was to make sure there was to make sure there was direct representation, 8 small wards and 2 councilors were the best way to ensure that. Students are 25% of the population and pay their fair share of taxes. The committee back then really wanted to make sure that the youth was well represented and to promote more youth engagement.
 - Robert Bristow-Johnson: 82% of the city got to stay in the same ward and vote in the same place.
 - Barbara Headrick: All the wards back then voiced what they wanted, just tried to draw the wards in a way that joined together neighborhoods that were cohesive with common issues.
 - Lea Terhune: Important part of the mapping is that part of the transparency of the process is the trust. (Robert Bristow Johnson) so called 'salamander district' was the best way to draw it, again, 82% stayed the same
 - Joan Shannon: The previous committee worked to provide for the needs of their neighborhoods
- Carol Livingston: About student wards- it is very difficult to campaign in Ward 8, UVM does not make accessing the students/dorms an easy process, the process of involving students is very difficult.

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Diane Meyerhoff and Meagan Tuttle: Menti Poll

- Attempting to use this new software to garner more feedback, testing out this format and it will be used in following meetings

Barbara Headrick: The survey can send the wrong implications because people don't know the ramifications of having more or less wards, no idea what it will look like

Q: Does the Mayor have the ability to vote in a tied (regular) city council vote?

Joan Shannon: No

Rama Kocherlakota: How do the Students feel about being grouped together in one ward?

A: That is something the redistricting committee is trying to find out

7:50-8:00 PM (10 mins) Next Steps

More Info to come about the logistics of the survey in the upcoming public meeting

Q: Will the survey questions be hashed out in the last Listening Session?

George: The plan is to schedule an additional meeting detailing the survey questions, planning to have the survey questions finished in December

Future Meetings will be in the same format, next Meeting 11/17 Miller Center

Meeting Adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Minutes by Ethan Fellow, CEDO